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ABSTRACT

A history of the Independent Study Project (ISP) as well as a report of the progress of the Project is presented. The presentation is divided into several parts: the history of the Project, what is actually proposed, what was done during the first six months of the Project, and what is being attempted now. The presentation concludes with an evaluation of the Project in terms of the whole area of higher education. The second presentation included in this document is taken from a paper presented at the Southwestern Regional Meeting of the College Entrance Examination Board and the College Scholarship Service Assembly on February 17, 1972. This presentation contains essentially the same information as the first with a slightly different slant. (Related documents are: LI003916, 003918 and 003919). (NH)

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THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT: [TWO PRESENTATIONS].

By

David L. Reich

Dallas Public Library
Dallas, Texas

1972

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THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT:

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

BY

DAVID L. REICH

PRESENTED AT THE

DALLAS CONFERENCE ON CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

THROUGH THE

COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

MARCH 30, 1972

LI 003 917

THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT:

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

Those of you who live around Dallas and read the Dallas papers have probably become aware of the Dallas Public Library's Independent Study Project already. There have been articles in the papers about the Project since last fall, when the Project was first announced, and continuing through the early part of this month with a number of articles concerning the first semiannual meeting of the Project's National Interest Council. If you missed those, there were half-page ads and articles in last Sunday's special education section. Others of you might have been alerted to our Project through an article about it in the fall 1971 issue of the College Board Review or the announcement of the meeting of the National Interest Council that appeared in a recent issue of Junior College Journal. I suspect that even some of you here were present on February 17 when Dr. Kenneth Shields of SMU and I discussed the Project during the Southwestern Regional Meeting of the College Entrance Examination Board. Probably, therefore, most of you here today are at least somewhat familiar with the Independent Study Project--ISP as we call it.

Nonetheless, I do feel that I should provide you with a history of the Project as well as bring you up-to-date on its progress. My presentation will be divided into several parts: the history of the Project, what we actually proposed to do, what we did during the first six months of the Project, and what we are trying to do now--or what's bugging us now. I guess there is another part, the final part, that has to do with

what some of us think a project such as our ISP means to the whole area of higher education.

The history of our Project is quite important to this presentation to you representatives of college and university administrations and faculties, particularly if there are any of you who wonder about our being interlopers here, I want to share with you the steps and the thoughts that directed our decision to initiate our Independent Study Project. It was in January 1970 that the Dallas Public Library was visited by representatives of the College Entrance Examination Board, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Council on Library Resources. The meeting had been arranged by the Council on Library Resources, and the purpose was to introduce us--and public libraries--to the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and to the idea of a project involving CLEP that the public library could involve itself in. The suggestion was that the public library could serve as a center for CLEP information and for providing assistance to CLEP candidates.

We were provided a drafted proposal of what a public library might do as a CLEP information and assistance center; we studied the proposal, considered it thoughtfully, and, finally reacted to it quite negatively, much to the disappointment of the original author, I know. Our major disagreement with that proposal was that it suggested that professional librarians could and should provide counseling to those pursuing self-study toward credit by examination through CLEP. Even allowing for possible problems with semantics, we could not agree that librarians could or should provide counseling. Librarians have always provided reader's advisory service, but that, we know, differs considerably from counseling, which, afterall, is a specialized profession quite apart from librarianship. What about academic advising, we asked ourselves;

in colleges where the professional librarians are recognized as members of the faculty, the librarians do in some cases have students assigned to them for academic advising. We agreed that, in so far as academic advising concerns interpreting college catalogs, suggesting what courses to take in preparation for a certain degree program, or what CLEP examinations to prepare for to fit into a CLEP program of a particular school, professional librarians could advise. Please note that I say "could" advise; later in this presentation I will come back to this role of acting as an academic advisor.

There were a number of questions and concerns the Dallas Public Library faced in responding to our visitors and their suggestions. For one, we wondered if there exists a large enough number of adults--I remind you that the College-Level Examination Program was designed for adults--who really would study independently. We knew that there are numerous opportunities for adults to continue their education in the Dallas area, including a community junior college with a typical community junior college open door policy. Another concern was that of the unknown reaction of schools to our becoming involved in a project concerning CLEP--would we be accused by any of the local education institutions of butting into their business?

Perhaps our biggest concern was that, if the Library were to begin such a project--try to attract adults in our community to study independently for academic recognition--would there be colleges and universities in the area where such independent students could obtain academic recognition? We surely did not want to encourage adults in our area to prepare for and to take CLEP examinations for credit, as all the CLEP advertising materials promise, if there were no schools in the area that granted credit by way

of CLEP. This question, I am sorry to report, continues to cause us no little concern. We were pretty well convinced at the time, however, that there do exist schools who have already a program of accepting CLEP and schools that were in the process of formulating such programs the same time we were in the process of formulating our Project.

Our first question--the number of potential CLEP takers--has, of course, never been fully answered. We were convinced, though, that there must be adults who could take advantage of such an opportunity as CLEP. I suspect that several facts helped us reach that conviction: one, we saw statistics gathered by CEEB that indicated a considerable number of adults had already taken CLEP examinations nation-wide; and, we learned of Dr. Margaret Fagin, Director of Programs for Women, Family, and Youth at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and her very successful Circuit Rider Project. Perhaps the most convincing factor was our own growing understanding of the philosophy of CLEP--as CLEP applies to the adult in the community.

CLEP, we eventually understood, is an opportunity for adults who, for whatever reason, will not be attracted to a campus, a structured program of courses, or even an evening or week-end course, at this time. I am not certain that we could have defined those "whatever reasons" back in 1970; we have surely become more aware of some of those reasons since the Project began and we have contact with adults who have "reasons" such as, not enough time to attend classes, not enough money for tuition, and, most important and, probably, most unsaid, not enough confidence. We are talking about adults who have been away from formal education at any level for some years; many, we are learning, need to prove to themselves first that they can still learn, that they can learn well enough to go to college, and that they can learn well enough to compete with the

typical young person in college. This better understanding of CLEP and what CLEP can offer not only helped us answer our question concerning potential independent students, it helped us answer the second concern I mentioned, because it told us that we would not be competing for students the local institutions of higher education would attract to their campuses.

With an appreciation of CLEP and its potential attraction to adults--to some adults--in our community and with the promise of colleges and universities in our area accepting CLEP, the Dallas Public Library advised the College Entrance Examination Board, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Council on Library Resources that we would accept the challenge and propose a project. We learned that, if an appropriate project were proposed, funding would be available. The suggestion of possible funding had a definite effect on our proposal, as we drafted it, for specially earmarked funds for the Project would mean that we could include aspects that we could not have otherwise afforded in our regular operating budget.

In June 1970 the Library received a call from Southern Methodist University advising us that the University was aware of our interest in CLEP and of the proposed project and, further, that the University was eager to offer support. That support, it pleases me to say, took on the form of not only encouragement but also direct participation in the project. SMU's offer to participate in the project was a tremendous stimulation to the Library's effort to design a program that would truly provide the citizens with the best possible assistance in independent study and preparing for the CLEP examinations. And, it was particularly gratifying to the Library that a local institution of higher education approached the Library with an offer to assist and participate rather than the Library's

seeking participation and assistance.

With the assistance from SMU and SMU's offer to provide the project with specific academic services, we proceeded to redraft the proposal. In January 1971 the proposal, now in its eleventh draft, which included a proposed Project budget of $100,000 for the two years of the Project, was submitted to the Council on Library Resources and the National Endowment for the Humanities for funding.

I imagine that many of you here have had the experience of preparing proposals. You will know that a proposal begins by stating the "problem." I would like to read from that section of our proposal because I believe that it will put our ISP in good perspective:

> Many adults are currently involved in independent study designed to enrich their personal lives, to improve their economic conditions, and to further their formal educations. Because these adults are unaffiliated with degree-granting institutions, little recognition is given to their activity. Within these self-motivated adults lies the potential for better educated citizens and a more profitable work force. At the present time, a large number of these adults read and/or study without proper assistance toward a planned course of study. If this independent study could be directed into approved channels which would provide academic credit for these efforts, such efforts would be much more meaningful in terms of personal and professional benefits. The current existence of the College Board's College-Level Examination Program provides a potential source for such an educational opportunity.
>
> It would seem that, to most successfully utilize this Examination Program, appropriate information and advice about the Program and appropriate study guides, reading lists, and tutorial services should be provided in a setting conducive to independent study. Since many persons directed to independent study use public libraries and since public libraries have traditionally worked in the areas of self-education and continuing education, often in cooperation with other educational institutions, it follows that a public library, with an institution of higher education cooperating and participating, could be an effective agent in providing informational and advisory services to these adults, said services designed to encourage independent study toward achieving a two-years college education. (Proposal, pp 1-2)

Reading further, the statement of purpose came out this way:

> This proposal seeks to investigate the role and the effectiveness of one public library system, the Dallas Public Library, with the cooperation and participation of one institution of higher education, Southern Methodist University, in assisting adults pursuing self-education directed to academic recognition in area colleges and universities and information about those and other colleges and universities.

To understand how we proposed to provide the assistance we intended, let me just read the Proposal Objectives:

> 1. To serve as an information center for the examinations program of the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and of the participation of area colleges and universities.
> 2. To serve as a distribution center for materials relative to the College-Level Examination Program.
> 3. To serve as a College Information Center by providing, for individual inquiry, multi-media presentations of information about area colleges and universities.
> 4. To serve as an advisory center to the adult interested in self-education by providing professional assistance in the selection of materials designed to further his goals in seeking academic recognition, by providing professionally prepared study guides and reading lists, and by making available tutorial services.
> 5. To serve as an education resource in the motivation of business and industry to encourage employees toward independent study.

And as the Objectives relate to the fact that this Project is a study:

> 6. To determine, through ongoing evaluation of the project, the appropriateness and the effectiveness of the public library in this educational arena.

And,

> 7. To provide information on and guidance to the entire public library field in this new area of educational involvement.

SMU's responsibility to the Project is to contract with the City of Dallas for appropriate members of the teaching faculty to prepare study guides and reading lists and to act as tutors and workshop planners and leaders and to provide the ongoing evaluation of the Project.

Since this Project is a study, it requires some controls: one of those controls is that five of the Dallas Public Library's fourteen branches were

selected to participate in the Project as model public libraries. The branches serve different socioeconomic communities including lower middle, middle middle, upper middle, and higher stratifications, and one inner-city library serving a socioeconomically-culturally-ethnically mixed population. Professional librarians at those branches are the staff members responsible for providing information services for CLEP and the participation of area colleges and universities in CLEP, reader's advisory service for the adult in the Program, workshops on using the library, and academic advisory service when such service is appropriate and possible.

Just to mention several other aspects of the Project as a study, which takes us away from a discussion on the actual service the Library is trying to provide for a moment, let me tell you that the Project's budget includes funds for a Project Director and a Project Secretary, both full-time, and for part-time contracted services of a Public Relations professional. There is an Advisory Committee to the Project; the committee consists of representatives of both the Dallas Public Library and Southern Methodist University. Particularly interesting, I think, is the Project's National Interest Council, an eight-member body whose job it is to review the Project and to consider the possible implications of the Project for other public libraries and the expansion of the concept and procedures of the Project on a national basis. Organizations represented by membership on the Council are the American Association of Junior Colleges--which, I understand, is changing its name to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges--the College Entrance Examination Board, the American Library Association, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Council on Library Resources. Public libraries represented on the Council are the Miami (Florida) Public Library, the St. Louis (Missouri) Public Library, and the Serra Regional Library System (San Diego, California);

all three have been acting as CLEP information outlets for some time and they provide public library, geographical representation on the National Interest Council.

You have now heard how the Dallas Public Library became involved with CLEP and how the Independent Study Project was conceived and what the Library, with the participation of SMU, proposed to do. The next step, obviously, was implementation. It was in September 1971 that the doors of those five selected branches serving as model public libraries opened with this new service, this new thing called ISP. The libraries were stocked with printed materials about CLEP provided by CEEB, and the librarians had attended workshops conducted by representatives of the College Board and Educational Testing Service and the Project Director. SMU faculty-prepared reading lists and study guides were duplicated by CEEB and stocked in the branches, and preparations were underway to produce filmstrip-cassette presentations from each of the area colleges and universities for use with DuKane projectors furnished the branches. And news stories and spot announcements were bringing in interested adults.

In her first semiannual report to the National Interest Council and to the funding agencies, the Project Director described the manner the five branch libraries tabulate the statistics gathered each week concerning the number of inquiries, the type of inquiries, the number of the different pieces of CLEP materials requested, the number of and which Study Guides/Reading Lists requested, etc. The Director noted that in all branches during the first six months of the Project, in-person inquiries outnumbered telephone inquiries by 50%. She noted, too, that the greatest number of inquiries have required in-depth discussion; the time required to answer questions about CLEP and about the Project have ranged from seven minutes at one branch to forty-five minutes at another branch.

It is too early to have reached any real conclusions about our Project--we completed the first six months the end of February--but I think it is safe to say that the difference in time required to respond to questions about CLEP and the Project is not surprising. At the branch library where most questions can be answered in only a few minutes the adults seeking information appear to be adults familiar with using the library--or a library--not unfamiliar with the mysteries of college, rather sophisticated people. That branch is in a part of the city where that level of sophistication could be expected. Where the librarians find they need to spend a long time with each adult seeking information and assistance, those adults are from less fortunate backgrounds, often members of minority groups. I might add that at both of the branches I am suggesting, the enthusiasm on the part of both the librarians and the independent students is high.

In addition to answering questions and giving away printed materials about CLEP and the Study Guides/Reading Lists, librarians have been ready to assist the independent students in selecting reading materials to support their study. So far, this has been the least requested service; yet it is the particular service that the professional librarians are particularly trained to provide. There seems to be a hesitancy on the part of those who ask for and receive the Study Guides/Reading Lists to accept--or even to request--books that are not on the Reading Lists. Let me take a few minutes to describe our intent as far as the Study Guides and Reading Lists are concerned.

We asked members of the SMU faculty to prepare study guides that were not to be course outlines or syllabi but directions for an adult who probably would not know how to approach the study of a subject. We asked the faculty

to prepare reading lists of non-textbook materials, those books the independent student should be able to find in his local public library. Now, I suspect that that was not a terribly clear assignment; I also suspect that it was not a very easy assignment. Afterall, we were asking this of rather traditional college instructors, academic professionals who have spent their academic lives involved in traditional, structured, time-slotted learning and teaching. Their first urge, as I recall, was to look at the CLEP examinations and design their study guides and reading lists to fit the examinations. Yet the CLEP examinations, according to our understanding, were themselves devised for the adult who might have learned in a non-traditional way: by watching many hours of television, by reading magazines, by listening to recordings, by working, by experiencing learning in life. CLEP exams were not designed to take after six semester hours of classroom lectures and weekly tests.

As you might imagine, some of the Study Guides and Reading Lists are better suited for the job than others. Some would overwhelm a graduate student. We are looking quite seriously at the Reading Lists in particular; perhaps such a program of assistance does not require such teaching-faculty-prepared lists. Perhaps the Reading Lists will negate the best service the professional librarians have to offer, that is, reader's advisory service based on knowledge of books and, particularly, their own collections of books.

Before I go on, I do want to assure you that my reference to the traditionalism of the teaching faculty was not meant to be one-sided. I remind you that we are also working with pretty traditional librarians who themselves are products of traditional higher education through the Master's Degree level. The Dallas Public Library likes to pride itself that we have non-traditional, agressive, out-reaching librarians, but I can not promise you that all of the

librarians in the branches participating in the ISP immediately accepted the whole notion of independent study leading to credit by examination.

I think that one of the best definitions of what we believe is the learning the adults we are trying to reach is comes right out of SMU's recently published booklet on Continuing Education, E Pluribus Unum:

> The traditional obstacles of this or that required course, so much a part of undergraduate education for the 18 to 21-year-old student, must be eliminated. Though vital to the younger student's discipline and self-enrichment, such requirements are useless detriments for the adult student who has the advantage of several years of work, military service, and independent experience. (p. 7)

Although SMU was not defining our Independent Study Project or CLEP specifically in that statement, it is a clear lesson for the instructors who have not been quite converted and the librarians who may still think learning can take place only in the "real" school.

But let me return to what has been offered to the adults who have been attracted to ISP. The proposal, you will remember, called for workshops and seminars to be conducted in the branches. Seven workshops were offered during the first six months period of the Project. The first, in October 1971, was on "How to Study Effectively;" it was presented by Mrs. Virginia Chancey of SMU to an audience of 68 adults. The same workshop was repeated the following month at another branch by the same workshop leader; 9 adults attended, but this was at the branch where it takes 45 minutes and longer to answer inquiries--that was a good turnout. Less attractive to the adults has been a workshop on "How to Use the Library," but "Effective Ways of Reading Books," "Organizing for Essay Tests," and "Introduction to the Humanities" have been audience-getters.

The workshop format is an informal give-and-take session, and, in most cases, audience participation has been excellent. Some feedback from

one of our independent students, who learned that taking tests today is quite a new experience compared to taking tests in the days before mark-sense pencils and small squares to black out, has caused us to consider offering a workshop on "How to Take an Examination." We think that that might be especially attractive for those who have been away from formal education and test-taking for a number of years--and for those who wear trifocals and who will have to be prepared--at least psychologically--for lining up squares.

We have had few requests so far for individual tutoring. The first request was in the nature of a somewhat urgent plea; a lady who uses the branch where the most time is spent in direct service had been studying various subjects for some time when she suddenly came upon this "thing" called "The Humanities." The lady was eager to continue her studying, but she had no idea of how to start with "The Humanities." Since we wanted to do all we could to help maintain her interest and enthusiasm, we called Dr. John Mears at SMU, since he was the author of a Study Guide/Reading List and since he had offered to help. This is a happy ending story because Dr. Mears telephoned the lady and gave her immediate direction and assistance. He has since conducted one workshop on "Introduction to the Humanities" at the branch the lady he helped uses, and he conducted a second one last night at another branch.

To recap, librarians have answered questions about CLEP (almost a thousand the first six months), gave away CLEP literature (3,056 pieces the first six months), distributed Study Guides/Reading Lists (2,054 the first six months), and attracted 138 adults to seven workshops during the first six months. How do those figures stack up to our expectations? We do not know because we had no set expectations. It is clear from those figures, however, that there are adults in the Dallas area who are attracted to our Independent

Study Project and to CLEP; how serious that initial interest is we are unable to determine, much to the frustration of our Project Evaluator, Dr. Betty Maynard of SMU. We hope that we have a clearer feeling about continued interest as we progress.

You may have realized that there has been one exclusion in the list of the services our librarians have provided. And it is a terribly important exclusion because I promised early in this presentation to come back to it, that is, the librarian's role of acting as an academic advisor. That service was left out of the list of services because it has been the service most difficult, if not impossible, to provide. It will not surprise you, I am sure, that the first questions most often asked are: "Where can I get credit for the examinations?" and "How much credit can I get?"

During October 1971 the Project Director visited and wrote letters to area colleges and universities describing the ISP. As the Director reported her experience, "...it was at this time we learned how much of a pilot project we really are." (Project Director's Report, March 7, 1972, p. 5) Our librarians are able to tell the adults the schools we know for certain do accept CLEP, that schools differ in which examinations they accept (that is, subject exams or the general exams), and that schools differ in how much credit they give. The librarians can and do direct the independent student to the colleges for information we cannot provide, but this can be a frustrating experience. A couple examples:

> One of our local universities reported recently that it had received a number of telephone calls following a period of some particularly good news coverage. The calls came to the Office of the Dean of Continuing Education, where the adult asking about that school's program for accepting CLEP and granting credit was referred to the Admissions Office, where the caller was referred back to the Continuing Education Office, where, this time, the caller was referred to the university's Testing Center, where no one could answer any questions about credits granted. And, amazing as it may sound, there seemed to be no one in the Admissions Office who could help. We would have to agree with the person who reported

> this to us that "people are getting the runaround."
>
> My second example concerns the same university. A student at that university took home to his mother a CLEP brochure. She called the Dean of Admissions, who referred her to the Testing Center, who referred her to our Independent Study Project Office. But her question was "How many hours credit can I get and in what subjects?"

The really confusing thing about those two examples is that the university is one that has made a particular point of publicly announcing that it does grant credit by examination through CLEP. And we are really up against it when we run into those colleges and universities who prefer to keep their credit-by-examination programs and policies privileged information, even from prospective students.

This is not, I assure you, a problem unique to the Dallas area. The three other libraries that have been acting as CLEP information centers all have reported that many of the adults who have been attracted to CLEP through the public library become discouraged when they get caught up in the academic mechanism of their local schools.

Certainly it would not be easy to be academic advisers for a number of colleges and universities; it is difficult enough for one school. But it would seem that it would not be too difficult to properly advise adults interest in CLEP if our librarians knew what each school in the area has decided is its CLEP policy. The 1971-72 General Bulletin of St. Edward's University in Austin includes two full pages of detailed explanation of that school's policy concerning credit by examination. The scores required for both the CLEP General Examinations and the Subject Examinations and the amount of semester hours granted are all clearly defined. Of course, not many adults in the Dallas area are thinking in terms of commuting to Austin to study toward a degree.

It is that sort of information that most adults attracted to our

Project want and need to know. It seems reasonable to us--and to our National Interest Council--that the public library, which is a free information source for all citizens, could be a central place where such information for all the schools in the area can be obtained. In addition to information, the librarians need to have the name of an individual in each admissions office who understands the philosophy of CLEP, who knows his own school's program concerning CLEP, and is sympathetic to the adult who is trying to approach higher education through independent study and credit by examination--and, I should not forget to add, who is a potential degree-seeking student for his school. It must be obvious to you from my examples earlier that we have not been quite successful in obtaining information--even college catalogs--and names.

Well, that is where we are--somewhat frustrated, to be sure, but only six months into a two years Project that will end in September 1973 as a study only. We expect to extend the services to all of the units of the Dallas Public Library after the study has been completed. Unless, of course, the whole idea is wrong, unless the new trend toward non-traditional study is wrong, unless external degree programs never develop in Texas. Have you wondered, incidentally, where external degree students will study if they never have to come on campus?

In my presentation at the Southwestern Regional Meeting of the College Entrance Examination Board in February, I began by quoting two pertinent statements, the first from SMU's E Pluribus Unum:

> ...national studies revealed higher adult education to be growing at a rate far more rapid than that of total higher education in the United States. (p. 2)

The second statement was from the January 15 issue of Library Journal:

> The number of adults involved in adult education programs now is up from seven percent of all eligible adults in 1957 to 11 percent today. That means well over 13 million people--and independent

> study or 'open university' programs are still in the pilot stage. (p. 150)

What I have described to you is one of those adult education programs that is "still in the pilot stage," the Dallas Public Library's Independent Study Project.

You will recall that our study hopes to determine the "appropriateness and the effectiveness of the public library in this educational arena." Judging from the tremendous expressions of interest in our Project we have received from all over the country from public librarians, academic librarians, college administrators, public school administrators, college and university faculty members, even a special librarian in industry, I believe that a large number of various segments of the education community have already agreed that this is an appropriate role for the public library. And certainly the Project's National Interest Council and the adults in the community who have already been attracted to the ISP support that foregone conclusion. I am inclined to think that we are really studying the preparedness of the public library to become involved in higher adult education this way.

Our hope with this Project is that we can, with the cooperation of the local colleges and universities, assist in redirecting adults back into formal education. As the film supplied by CEEB which describes the College-Level Examination Program says it, for many people CLEP can be a "gift of time." If it has a real place in this new era of non-traditional study, the public library, it seems to me, can be the instrument whereby the adult who, for whatever reason, cannot be attracted directly into a formal, structured, institutionalized higher education program, can bring together his own independent experience with as much independent study as he may require and prove to himself and to an academic institution through credit by examination that he can still learn.

Looking ahead, we must consider the role the public library may play when colleges and universities begin to offer external degree programs. Dr. Fred Cole, President of the Council on Library Resources, a member of our National Interest Council, and a member of the national Commission on Non-Traditional Study, has prepared a paper for presentation to the Commission in which he notes that the logical center for non-traditional study is the public library.

Dr. Louis Shores, Dean Emeritus, Florida State University, in his 1968 article, "Public Library U.S.A.", in a British publication, Libraries For the People, describes the Library-College, a concept that Dr. Shores has been champion of for some years, as "...a college that is a library, and a library that is a college. The learning mode is essentially what it has been in the public library." He reported in that article that:

> About seventy-five innovative and experimental colleges are now introducing aspects of the Library-College. But the public library, the originator of this type of education, still diffidently and cautiously holds back, unwilling to compete with formal education in strengthening the national mind.
>
> Sooner or later I believe Public Library U.S.A. will more boldly assume its role as the People's University. (p. 255)

I am not sure that I am ready to agree with Louis Shores that the public library, even if it does assume its role as the People's University, will need to compete with formal education. I am satisfied to join the institutions of formal education in this exciting time of change and become partners with you in higher adult education. I hope that you share our expectations for our Independent Study Project as the first contract in that partnership.

THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY'S INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT; THE OPENING OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY?

BY

DAVID L. REICH

DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY
DALLAS, TEXAS

February 1972

The Dallas Public Library's Independent Study Project; The Opening of the Open University?

[From a paper presented at the Southwestern Regional Meeting of the College Entrance Examination Board and the College Scholarship Service Assembly, February 17, 1972, Dallas, Texas]

To introduce this description of the Dallas Public Library's Independent Study Project, here are two recently published statements that have something significant to say about adult education. The first appeared in Southern Methodist University's new booklet on Continuing Education, E Pluribus Unum, a publication which, incidentally, contains some excellent statements about the whole idea of adult and continuing education and one academic institution's commitment to that idea:

> ...national studies revealed higher adult education to be growing at a rate far more rapid than that of total higher education in the United States.[1]

The second statement appeared in the January 15 issue of Library Journal:

> The number of adults involved in adult education programs now is up from seven percent of all eligible adults in 1957 to 11 percent today. That means well over 13 million people--and independent study or 'open university' programs are still in the pilot stage.[2]

Here, then, is a description of one of those independent study programs that is "still in the pilot stage." The project (which we call ISP for short) is outlined in some detail, as is the history of the proposal, in the article about our project in the Fall 1971 issue of College Board Review; your attention is invited to that article, particularly if you might be interested in one public institution, the Dallas Public Library's, experience of working with--and within the

confines of--a city administrative structure and a federal funding agency to bring about the sort of project we did. Even though it is a success story (to the tune of $100,000 in grant funds) it was anything but an easy experience, and it caused some of us to wonder if grants are really worth the red tape.

An overview of the history of the Independent Study Project is appropriate, however, if one is to understand how a public library became involved in such a thing. It was in January 1970 that we were visited by representatives of the College Entrance Examination Board, the Council on Library Resources, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and it was then that we were introduced to the College-Level Examination Program. I must admit that we were so unaware of CLEP at that time that we mistakenly called it Cleep for the first few months until we learned better. A suggested proposal of what a public library might do as a CLEP information and assistance center was provided us by CEEB; it was not well received, primarily because it suggested that professional librarians could provide counseling to those pursuing self-study toward credit by examination. Librarians have always provided reader's advisory service, but that differs considerably from academic counseling, a quite specialized profession apart from librarianship. We were faced, then, with two questions:

(1) Is it appropriate for the public library to become involved in this area of higher education, and

(2) If it is, what is the role the library can or should play?

We weighed two particular concerns in relation to our first question:

(1) Would the library be thought by some of the local educational institutions of getting into their business, especially

since there is in our area a community college district that provides our citizens with the open door philosophy approach to the community junior college?

(2) Are there colleges and universities in the Dallas area that accept CLEP for credit? The Library would not want to encourage local citizens to prepare for CLEP examinations if there were not schools locally where they could go to enter a formal program and obtain credit for what they had learned independently.

We were able eventually to satisfy those concerns by gaining a better understanding of the philosophy of CLEP and by learning that there are, indeed, a number of schools in our area which do accept CLEP.

What, then, would be the role of the public library if we were to become a CLEP information and assistance center? Just that, we decided: a center for information about CLEP, a place where CLEP candidates could get assistance and direction in their independent study, and a one-stop location where they could learn about the schools in the area that do accept students by examination through CLEP.

At this point, which was six months after our introduction to CLEP, Southern Methodist University entered the picture. The university offered to participate in the project by providing the program with specific academic services:

(1) Appropriate members of the faculty to prepare study guides and reading lists for the subject areas included in the CLEP examinations

(2) Appropriate resource persons from the academic community to act as tutors and seminar/workshop planners and leaders to provide aid, guidance, and direction to the adults studying independently in the program

(3) An ongoing evaluation of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project.

Since, it was decided, this should be a somewhat controlled study, if we hoped to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the library in this area of higher education, we designed the program to last two years and to be limited to five of our branch libraries, which would serve as model public libraries. The five branches differ from each other in size of facility, staff, and collection, and they serve quite different socioeconomic-cultural-ethnic communities.

During the summer 1971 we met with members of SMU faculty to discuss the study guides and reading lists they were to prepare for the project. We also met with the librarians of our branches that were to serve as model public libraries in the project. Both were interesting meetings. At one we were talking with rather traditional college instructors, academic professionals, who have spent their academic lives involved in traditional, structured, limited (in the temporal sense), learning and teaching. We were asking them to prepare study guides that were not to be course outlines or syllabi but "directions" for an adult involved in independent study and to prepare reading lists of non-textbook materials, those the independent student should find in his local public library. With our own librarians we were working with professionals who are the product of traditional higher education through the Master's Degree level. We were asking them to assist and help direct adults seeking college credit in a most non-traditional way. We hope that we educated both groups in our understanding of the CLEP philosophy, introduced them to our interest in the whole area of non-traditional study (including the current interest in external degree programs), and convinced them that the adult can study and learn independently by using the public library.

We actually began our Independent Study Project in September 1971 with a Project Director, a Project Secretary, and the adult librarians in the five branches. We are now in the sixth month of serving as CLEP information and assistance centers. We have had a number of workshops and tutorials--with varying success--and we have given to interested adults thousands of CLEP brochures and copies of study guides and reading lists. Six months, or course, is too short a time to have reached any conclusions; there are some feelings we are noticing, however. For one thing, we are able to recognize that there are, indeed, adults in the Dallas area who can be attracted to independent study and to CLEP. This must mean that there are adults here who, for whatever reason, will not go now to an academic institution--perhaps the time is not convenient for them (even with all the evening courses offered); perhaps some of them are reluctant to enter the academic structure and to compete with young people; perhaps they simply need the encouragement and self-confidence that a program of independent study and credit by examination can provide.

Another feeling we have is that we are not reaching enough of the adults who might be attracted to independent study and CLEP. Our Project includes the contracted, part-time services of a Public Relations professional, who has been successful in obtaining several news and feature stories about the project in Dallas papers and spots on local television and radio stations. The project, however, competes with others for public service time. As a matter of fact, the project competes with the Library for time, and there is a problem here, we feel: we would prefer that the Independent Study Project not be viewed by the news media as another Dallas Public Library program--we would hope that it could be considered an <u>educational</u> program with the library merely a tool. We are unsure of

our ground here, since, we are learning, the news media is not always as enthusiastic about educational news items as we are. What we really need, if we are going to make the citizens of the Dallas area aware of ISP and CLEP, is paid advertisement. We will try that this spring with half-page ads in the special education sections of both major Dallas newspapers.

Still another feeling we have is that we need more communication with and information from the local institutions of higher education that accept CLEP. The most frequently asked questions by those who come to one of the branch libraries for information about CLEP are: What schools accept CLEP and how much credit do I get for the examinations? We do tell the adults the schools we know of for certain that do accept CLEP, and we tell them that the schools differ in what they accept (that is, subject exams or the general exams) and how much credit they give. We can and do direct the independent student to the colleges for information we cannot provide. We are trying to obtain from each school the name of an individual in the admissions office who understands the philosophy of CLEP, who knows his school's own program concerning CLEP, and is sympathetic to the adult who is trying to approach higher education through independent study and credit by examination. Other public libraries that have provided information about CLEP have reported that some of the adults who have been attracted to CLEP through the public library become discouraged when they become caught up in the academic mechanism of the local schools.

We have provided for a College Information Center in each of the five branches participating in the project. The Center consists of printed materials about the colleges and universities in the area and an audiovisual unit that provides sound-visual presentations of information

about their entrance requirements, tuition and fees, curricula, facilities, and whatever they choose to provide about their examinations program.

It should be reported that we have received tremendous expressions of interest in our project from all over the country: public librarians, academic librarians, college administrators, public school administrators, university faculty members, even a special librarian who wondered if business and industry libraries could not do something similar for their business and industry employees. It was recognized in the beginning that this project should have considerable interest nationally and that it might well provide direction for public libraries and educational concerns throughout the country. We have formed a group the project's proposal calls the National Interest Council, an eight-member body whose job it will be to review the project and to consider possible implications of the project for other public libraries and expansion of the concept and procedures of the project on a national basis. The Council will meet four times (semi-annually) during the period of the study. Organizations represented by membership on the Council are the College Entrance Examination Board, the Council on Library Resources, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Library Association, and the American Association of Junior Colleges. Public libraries represented on the Council are the Miami (Florida) Public Library, the St. Louis (Missouri) Public Library, and the Serra Regional Library System (San Diego, California); all three have been acting as CLEP information centers for some time.

Our hope is that we can, with the cooperation of the local schools, assist in redirecting adults back into formal education--as the College Board film describing the College-Level Examination Program puts it, for many people

CLEP can be a "gift of time." And, as SMU's booklet on Continuing Education states it, "Education can no longer be considered an isolated experience that happens to an individual sometime between the ages of six and [3] And:

> The traditional obstacles of this or that required course, so much a part of undergraduate education for the 18 to 21-year-old student, must be eliminated. Though vital to the younger student's discipline and self-enrichment, such requirements are useless detriments for the adult student who has the advantage of several years of work, military service, and independent experience.[4]

If it has a real place in this new era of non-traditional study at all, the public library, it seems to me, can be the instrument whereby the adult who cannot, for whatever reason, be attracted directly into a formal, structured higher education program, can bring together his "several years of work, military service, and independent experience" and as much independent study he may require and prove to himself and to an academic institution through credit by examination that he can still learn. Looking ahead, we must consider the role the public library may play when colleges and universities all over the country begin to offer external degree programs. Dr. Fred Cole, President of the Council on Library Resources, and a member of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study, has prepared a paper for presentation to the Commission in which he notes that the logical center for non-traditional study is the public library. Since citizens have always used the public library for study, whether to pursue their own interests independently or for school assignments, most public librarians are inclined to agree with Dr. Cole. Our Independent Study Project will tell us, hopefully, if public libraries are ready.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Southern Methodist University, The School of Continuing Education, E Pluribus Unum. [Dallas, Texas, 1971]. [p. 2].

[2]Library Journal, Vol. 97, No. 2 (January 15, 1972), p. 150.

[3]Southern Methodist University, loc. cit., [p. 6].

[4]Ibid., [p. 7].

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Dallas Public Library

Independent Study Project

Mrs. Jean Brooks
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November 20, 1972

Ms. Karen M. Emmons
Library Assistant
Educational Resources Information Center
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Dear Ms. Emmons:

We are delighted to send materials to ERIC. I believe it should be made clear that each of the reports sent is an interim report. Such reports are prepared each 6 months for our funding agencies. There will be a third in March of 1973, and the final report in September of 1973.

The AHIL article may not be the type of material you use. I am not certain whether this would constitute a copyrighted article or not.

I am also enclosing two copies of a brochure and a monthly newsletter which are available to the independent student. They may not be suitable to ERIC but they will describe aspects of the Project for you.

The Study Guide/Reading Lists which the Project makes available to students are experimental models only and not for dissemination at present. Should this policy be changed in the future we will let you know.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Jean Brooks

Jean S. Brooks
Project Director

JB/ss

Enclosures

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